

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : DCM - Mr. Thomas J. Dunnigan  
THRU: CG - Ralph H. Cadeaux  
FROM : CONS - John H. Adams

SUBJECT: American Citizens Who Claim to be

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY *JC* DATE *8/18/81*

DATE: December 22, 1975  
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE  
TS AUTH. REASON(S)  
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐  
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒  
RELEASE DENIED ☐  
PA OF FOI EXEMPTIONS

The first group of 8 adults and 12 children arrived in early 1969 from Chicago via Liberia where they had been living for more than a year in communes. They settled in Arad and were generally accepted.

The second group of eight families arrived in December, 1969 and created quite a sensation. They spoke some Hebrew, declared themselves to be Jews who were descended from a group of approximately 140 Black Jews who were exiled from Israel to Africa in approximately 700 B.C. Absorption authorities granted them rights as immigrants but stipulated that their claim to be Jews had to be verified. They received a warm welcome in the development town of Dimona where they were settled.

Trouble started with the arrival of the third group from Liberia. Permission was not sought in advance, and they were not given immigrants' rights. Eight families already established in the area took them in. More arrived and crowded into the homes which had been set aside for the first groups. Problems of overcrowding, robbery of a filling station in the area, reluctance to pay for food in the markets, raucous living and general friction with the other residents of the area. Problems came to a head with the hatchet murder of one of the group in January, 1972. Five others were charged and convicted of manslaughter and conspiracy. All have now been released and deported to the United States.

A decision was made in 1971 that subsequent groups be denied entry into the country as non bona fide visitors. GOI then started an effort to deport those who remain (approximately 300, including children) for illegal presence, i.e., overstaying tourist visas. Only 5 or 6 have temporary residence visas which were granted to the first group in 1969. A serious deportation effort was initiated in 1972, but before 20-30 had been expelled, a large number (approximately 60-70) appeared at this Embassy and renounced their U.S. citizenship, which effectively precluded further deportation, i.e., to what country and with what travel document. GOI then backed off and matter has been relatively quiet for past two years.



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During the past year approximately 8-10 women--usually unmarried but with several children--have come to the Embassy claiming to be fed up with the entire movement and have requested assistance to return to the U.S. As very few have family or friends who are able to provide such assistance, a majority of them have been repatriated at USC expense.

During a major deportation drive in 1973, Mrs. Huebner of the Ministry of the Interior verbally assured the Embassy that the GOI would fund the return of any Black Hebrews who voluntarily sought such assistance from the Embassy. Several, in fact, went back in this way. Recently, however, she has contended that they no longer have the funds to do this and will pay for only those who are on a "list" of illegals in the country. As virtually the entire community (still numbering approximately 300 people) is illegal, her distinction is less than clear. The number has not appreciably diminished as new members have managed to enter the country, primarily because of the apparent reluctance of the Israeli authorities to intensively question all Black Americans upon their arrival in the country.

The situation is presently quiet for the Embassy, and the GOI appears to be more relaxed. A recent non-critical documentary on "The Black Hebrews of Dimona" was shown on Israeli TV during prime time--possibly to demonstrate that, indeed, the Zionist State is not racist and tolerates even this bizarre group in its midst.

jm  
CONS:JHAdams:jep

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